Crooked Run Agricultural Working Group Meeting
Lord Fairfax Community College
January 28, 2016

What will the agricultural working group do?
This group, which is typically made up of local farmers, Soil and Water Conservation District, Natural Resource Conservation Service and VA Cooperative Extension staff, will review strategies for reducing bacteria coming in to Crooked, Stephens, and West Runs and Willow Brook from agricultural sources. These sources include things like livestock in streams, and runoff of manure from pastures.

Questions for discussion by the working group:

1) General information about local agriculture
    - How are farmers in the region doing? Do you expect to see many significant changes in farming in the area over the next 5-10 years?
    - Is much of the farmland leased?
    - Are there many absentee landowners in the watershed?
    - Is there much development pressure?

2) How to spread the word about conservation programs
    - What are the best ways to let farmers know about conservation programs?
    - Are there any groups in the watershed that would be good to partner with in education and outreach efforts?
    - Are there particularly areas within the community where outreach should be focused (e.g. areas where considerable pollution is occurring, areas where people like to swim or fish)?
    - Would there be much local interest in a volunteer monitoring program?

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Potential best management practices for consideration:
Please rank the practices included in the table below (7 total) with 1 being the highest priority practice (one that you feel is most applicable in the area) and 7 being the very lowest priority (one that you feel is the least applicable to area farms)

Best management practice	**Description**	**Rank (1-7)**
Streamside livestock exclusion fencing	Excluding livestock from streams with fencing, providing alternative water sources or limited access points to the stream	
Rotational grazing	Establishing a series of grazing paddocks with cross fencing and rotating livestock to maximize forage production while preventing overgrazing	
Forested streamside buffers	Planting trees and shrubs in strips (35 foot minimum) along streams adjacent to pasture and cropland	
Grassed streamside buffers	Planting grasses in strips (35 foot minimum) along streams adjacent to pasture and cropland)	
Forestation of crop, pasture or hayland	Convert existing pasture, crop or hayland to forest (hardwood or conifers)	
Continuous no-till	Cropland is planted and maintained using no-till methods, only effective in reducing bacteria for cropland receiving manure applications (not commercial fertilizer)	
Manure composting/storage facilities (equine)	Construction of planned system designed to manage solid equine waste from areas where horses are concentrated either through composting or storage	

Obstacles to streamside livestock exclusion:
In order to address the bacteria problem in the creeks, livestock will have to be excluded. In order to identify the best way to accomplish this, it's important to understand the obstacles to fencing livestock out. Please rank the following obstacles to fencing livestock out of streams 1-5 with 1 being the most common and relevant obstacle to address and 5 being the least common or relevant obstacle.

Obstacle	**Rank (1-5)**
The cost of installing fencing and off stream water is too high, even with cost share assistance from federal and state programs	
Cannot afford to give up the land for a 35 foot buffer	
General maintenance of fencing is time consuming and expensive	
Grazing land is rented with short term leases and landowners are not interested in installing and/or maintaining streamside fencing and off stream water	
People do not trust the government and do not want to work through state and federal cost share programs to installing fencing systems	